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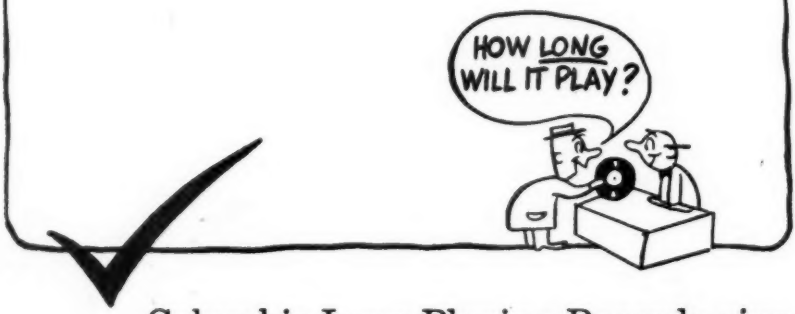
The American RECORD GUIDE



OCTOBER, 1949 -- VOL. XVI, No. 2
edited by PETER HUGH REED
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The American RECORD GUIDE

October, 1949 — Vol. XVI, No. 2

formerly THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



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Published by THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE.

- Editorial Offices: 115 Reed Ave., Pelham 65, N.Y. Peter Hugh Reed, *Editor;* Philip L. Miller, James Norwood, C. J. Luten Dorothy S. Gelatt, *Associate Editors;* Harold C. Schonberg, Alan Rich, Anson W. Peckham. *Contributing Editors.*
- Paul Girard, *Circulation* and *Advertising.* Julius S. Spector, *Art Editor.*
- Published monthly, *The American Record Guide* sell at thirty cents a copy. $3.00 annually in the U.S.A. Annual rate in all foreign countries $3.25.
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Reentered as second class matter November 7, 1944, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March, 3, 1879. (Copyright 1949 by Peter Hugh Reed).

Complexities of the Ear

Editorial Notes

RECENTLY we discussed with several sound technicians, one of whom is a keen music listener and a record enthusiast, some characteristics of the responses of the human ear.

It is a well known fact that people become "ear-conditioned" to the reproduction of music from varying types of equipment. It is also true that many seem unable or unwilling to endorse, much less appreciate, any other type of reproduction than that to which their ears are inured. This well chosen verb was used by our musical technician who contends that a given type of reproducing equipment can over a given period of time "harden" or "toughen" the aural resistence of an individual.

"Ear-conditioning has a great deal to do with the physical and mental makeup of an individual," remarked another one of the group. "I recall some remarks by an engineer in your magazine a while back that I agreed with. They had to do with ear-conditioning based on what we engineers call 'subjective distortion.' The writer rightfully contended that objections to distortion derive from 'a mental interpretation of quality based upon individual reaction to aural response usually conditioned by a lack or presence of previous training' These objections are also conditioned by over-familiarity of sound through one type of reproduction. Engineers, being of an objective mind, are not generally sold to one type of reproduction. They seldom become ear-conditioned because they rely upon measurements of sound, not upon aural responses."

Our musical technician challenged this statement immediately, stating that recording and its reproduction has long suffered as a result of the purely objective response to reproduction. "At one point in his excellent book on the record, the English engineer H. Courtney Bryson states:

'Our sense of estheticism has shown us that the most pleasing sounds lie in the region midway between the threshold of feeling and its limit of audibility.' This might lead some to believe that manufacturers of reproducing equipment through the long years should have considered the 'midway region,' but one doubts that a 'sense of estheticism,' in the true sense of the term, governed the output of equipment manufactured commercially.

"It is true that the majority of people are limited in their range of hearing. And, it is also true, that there are a group of listeners who are unpleasantly affected by extended range and who are keenly sensitive to distortion in higher frequencies. If I recall correctly, the same engineer you have quoted stated that the ear from an esthetic standpoint is the criterion for most of us. Although it may be argued whether the ear is the best criterion, it is my belief that the ear is a test by which the results of engineering measurements should be considered. It is rumored that one of the major record companies in recent years has altered engineering measurements at the instigation of a man of musical perceptions to the betterment of its recording."

Engineers vs. Musicians

"I am willing to concede," said another of the group, "that cooperation between the engineer and the musician might be advantageously considered. However, musicians are often notoriously remiss in critical assessment of reproducing values; by and large they listen for interpretative values not reproductive ones. If this were untrue, a great many poorly reproduced recordings would never have been passed by the artists represented. I have always had the feeling that statements on recording characteristics by most musicians are word placed in their mouths.

"But let us return to ear-conditioning. I concur with those who contend that becoming so accustomed to one type of reproduction that the superior qualities of another are not apprehended is an undesirable state. If I recall rightly the engineer quoted made these same observations and ended up by pointing out that 'the eye is not similarly limited, or people would not enjoy new sights, new vistas or new environments'."

Being in a group of men, it was not surprising to have the reactions of women listeners brought up. The contention was made that more women than men are keenly affected by higher frequencies and distortion in reproduction. Since I didn't agree with this contention, I promptly pointed out that men are inclined to shout loudest about the so-called foibles of the fair sex, especially when they are in disagreement. Moreover, the ladies are frequently given to speaking their minds in a more forcible manner.

"It has been my belief," said our musical friend, "that a fair test between the sexes has never been conducted. It may be that in a wide survey of mixed music listeners the proportion would prove to be nearly equal. Sensitivity in hearing is not a natural prerogative of women."

Some Facts on Hearing

The phenomena of hearing is both an intricate and a many sided wonder. In relation to music, it has proved to be most complex. One authority on the subject, C. F. Baker (vis. "What We Hear, A Treatise On the Phenomena of Sound," The Vincent Music Co., Ltd., London) says:

"Different motions, under different conditions, are conveyed to the sensorium by means of the different senses; thus, the special and peculiar etherial motion conveyed to the brain by the eye gives the sensation of light; while the special and peculiar aerial motion conveyed to the brain by the ear gives the sensation of sound. By this, we see that there must be a special motion to the sensorium before we can truly say, 'we see,' or 'we hear.'

"Now, in the case of sound, it is evident that a corresponding special motion of the brain must always take place when the sensation of sound is produced, as it is absolutely requisite for hearing and discerning sound at all, and may continually take place whether our emotional nature is affected or not."

Ear-conditioning in relation to music's reproduction is due mainly to the quality and type of equipment employed over a period of time, as has been stated. "It is also due," continued my musical friend, "in no small way to the placement of equipment in the home, to the acoustics of a room, and to the retarding characteristics of furniture, rugs, etc." We can sum up his further remarks thusly:

"Many people possessing equipment which reproduces only half of the frequiency range in a record dampen the reproduction of sound by poor placement of

(*Continued on page 38*)



VOICES OF YESTERDAY

Some Personal Favorites

By LEO RIEMANS *

IN A COLLECTION of over 10,000 discs, it is difficult to select a dozen favorites, even when the choice is limited to vocal recordings.

My interest in singing is long and varied, and for that reason I wish to make my selection from various types of voices, from the acoustical and electrical recording periods, in an even balance of opera and song. Because I believe that some of the great vocal artistry of the past is not as well known as it should be, I have decided to recommend some excellent records which I feel collectors and admirers of fine vocal artistry might do well to seek, rather than mentioning universally accepted classics. Many of these may easily have been missed, though most of these records are not top rarities. Indeed, I believe that there is a fair chance of acquiring any or all of them.

1. **BLANCHE MARCHESI. Amury, amury** (arr. Sodero), and **When I Am Laid in Earth** from **Dido and Aeneas** (Purcell). IRCC disc 89.

If the four Marchesi records had been issued in album, I would recommend the whole set. That I was responsible for her making these recordings in her 73rd year is not the prime reason for this disc in my list. Nor is the reason to be found in the miraculous preservation of her voice on this record. It is rather her extraordinary projection of personality. The projection of personality is what I always seek first in a record, and, unfortunately, what I miss in so many modern recordings. Marchesi's Dido is by far the most moving I have ever heard. The record, issued by IRCC, was actually a second one made a few days after her first effort. I have a copy of the first rejected, which is even more moving. On this record her voice has a curious veiled quality in the words "death is now a welcome guest." The Sicilian Cartdriver's Song should be compared with Toti dal Monti's insipid rendition. It too offers a deeply moving experience.

2. **LUCIEN FUGERE. Grand Aria** from **La Maitre de Chapelle** (Paèr). French Columbia LFX 32. Electric recording, issued in 1932.

Here is another example of undiminished vocal powers at an advanced age. The famous French bass-baritone, Fugère, was 82 when he made this record but he sounds like a lustry 50. It has long been believed that he never recorded before he was 80, but Bauer's catalogue mentions an old Zonophone disc, which I have never heard. This great singer, who created the Father in "Louise," Sancho Panche in Massenet's

* Mr. Riemans is a critic in Den Haag, Holland, internationally known for his interest in recordings.

"Don Quichotte" (a score which is dedicated to him) and many other important roles, was the Baccaloni of Paris from the 1880s until as recently as 1933, when at the age of 85 he still sang Dr. Bartolo at the Opéra Comique. His records, issued only in France, are difficult to get elsewhere. This one is by far the most characteristic of the list, and an electrical recording of an uncommonly interesting aria. It really is a complete opera within an opera. The pompous composer relates in it the premiere of his magnum opus, singing snatches of the overture (imitating flutes, tom-tom, etc.), the grand aria, the big scenes, and finally gives a description of the success (mingled with some whistles from the orchestra). It is amazing that this capital bit of humor in music should be so little known today. Fugère gives a plastic portrayal of the pompous music-master, making him come to life in a vivid way, and obscures the fiendish difficulties of the aria. I wonder how many baritones would be capable of singing it nowdays, let alone equalling this 82-year old veteran.

3. **IRENE ABENDROTH. Bell raggio lusinghier** from **Semiramide** (Russini). IRCC 189. (Coupled to another air from the same opera sung by Eleanora De Cisneros).

This recording formerly was one of the greatest of all rarities. Recorded in Dresden in 1903, only a few copies survived. It was fortunately re-recorded by IRCC in 1940, and at last made available to collectors. This is one of the most perfect coloratura recordings I know. Listening to it one has an idea of how the fabulous singers of the last century must have sounded—Malibran, Paste, Grisi, and Patti in her youth. This is all the more surprising as the singer was never a world-wide celebrity. She never sang in America, and her short career was restricted to Vienna (where she was not even appreciated) and to Dresden. Yet she was a favorite pupil of the great Lamperti, and —in my estimation—she sounds like she may well have been. Hers was a coloratura soprano that sang also Norma, Aida and Amelia in the "Masked Ball." She was the first German Tosca. The voice has a luscious dark quality, while the top register glitters like so many jewels. In addition, there is her style, which cannot be described. It sounds like the echo of a lost civilization.

4. **ADELINA PATTI. Voi che sapete** from **Nozze di Figaro** (Mozart). H.M.V. 03051.

Famous though Patti was, and as well known as she is among collectors, I have felt that she is greatly underestimated as an artist. Her records are generally treated as curiousities (museum pieces, one is temted to say) but seldom played. I cannot agree with this premise. True, Patti was 63 when she made her records in 1905, and her voice had become darker and had obvious defects (especially her breath, which is often noticeably strained, as in her "Casta diva"). Somehow the legend has been circulated that she was a smooth singer in her day, without much personality. To my way of thinking, every one of her records disproves this contention. They show a personality as vivid and as colorful as Conchita Supervia or Blanche Marchesi. And what art there is in these records! Just listen to her "Connais tu le pays" and compare that with any other recording. I select Cherubino's aria as the most characteristic of her many recordings. Bear in mind, when listening to this, that Patti never sang the role on the stage and was 63 when she made the record. Yet, she is the only singer, for me, who makes the love-struck page come to life. She suggests a true Cherubino. Her phrasing is so perfect that it may require several hearings to grasp the many delicate innuendos she brings to the text, to appreciate the coloring in the voice, the ingenious rubato, which would be the nightmare of present-day Mozart conductors. True, the top note is not in the score, but only the purists will resent it. Patti was one of those artists who believed completely in anything she did and therefore convinced even in her mistakes or liberties.

5. **MATTIA BATTISTINI. Perché tremar** from **Zampa** (Herold), and **Pieta rispetto, amore** from **Macbeth** (Verdi). IRCC 202.

I do not have the second side, but own the "Zampa" on an original G&T. There had to be one Battistini in this list, and it was a toss-up between his "Ah! per sempre" from Bellini's "Puritani" and this one. The "Zampa" air was originally written for a tenor. Maurel was the first baritone to sing it. Battistini's tenor-like voice is ideally suited to it. This s a sample of the lost art of true "bel canto." It is a matter of style. What particularly endear

Battistini to me is the same gift as Patti's, of making the character come to life by coloring the voice. The pleading, caressing qualities in this aria have the proper demonic quality, that certain something I call "morbidezze," which you either feel or do not feel. Let us hope you do feel it!

6. FERNANDO DE LUCIA and MARIA GALVANY. Son geloso from **La Sonnambula** (Bellini). IRCC 104.

This selection is unfortunately coupled with a bad recording from "Lohengrin." Here is "morbidezze" again. De Lucia fairly oozed it. I have selected this particular recording for the magnificent phrases of the opening. Curiously enough this is a record that inevitably creates controversies. People either admire it so much that they wish it repeated again and again, or they refuse to admire it on the basis of an innate dislike for De Lucia's voice. Being an admirer of De Lucia's voice, I am afraid I am intolerant toward those who dislike it.

7. ALMA GLUCK. Marta's Aria from **The Czar's Bride** (Rimsky-Korsakoff), and **Rossignols amoureaux** (Rameau). HRS 1037 or Victor 74383 and 74249.

Alma Gluck's voice has had a fascination for me since I was a child. By a lucky coincidence this coupling represents two characteristic sides of her artistry. In the rare Rameau air she is a glittering coloratura singer of rare splendor, while on the other side her "morbidezza" fully equals that of Marchesi.

8. JOHN McCORMACK. Ganymed and Beherzigung (Hugo Wolf). H.M.V. 1830 (only obtainable in the Hugo Wolf Society set II).

There had to be a McCormack record in this list, though I would prefer to place almost his total output in it, including many of the trival selections upon which he squandered his vocal gifts. His famous "Il mio tesoro" from "Don Giovanni" needs no recommendation, as it was recently made available in Victor's Heritage series. To select one of his Irish or English songs would be difficult, so I chose this less familiar item, which, tucked away in a set of six discs (McCormack's sole contribution to the Wolf Society), may have escaped the notice of his many admirers. If he had never made any other record but this one, it would suffice to place him among the immortals. The "Ganymed" is especially one of the most perfect specimens of lieder singing that has come to my knowledge or attention. His phrasing of the difficult final lines borders on the miraculous.

9. GERVASE ELWES. Sigh No More Ladies, and **Phyllis Has Such Charming Graces.** H.M.V. B320.

It has often struck me as curious that this great English tenor seems to be forgotten, though his death occurred about the same time as Caruso's. He died in an accident on Boston's Back Bay Station, significantly in an act of courtesy and chivalry, typical of the man. These qualities are apparent in his artistry. He began his career late in life, but even though he was around 50 when his records were made, the voice seems in its prime. Elwes's art was highly cultured, indeed if ever a singer sounded like the nobleman born, it was he. There is that same fascination and magnetism about his interpretations that one finds in the best McCormack, in everything I have heard of Roland Hayes, in some of Karl Erb and in John Coates, another English tenor (who should have more devoted admirers).

10. SUSAN METCALFE CASALS. Recital of Songs by Schubert, Schumann and Fauré. H.M.V. JG19-22.

This can be classified as an album, and so I can recommend all these discs and be spared the dilemma of chosing only one. Though, if I had to, I would select the Fauré with the delicious "Nell" and the evocative "Soir." These records were issued privately in England. The singer remains a somewhat mysterious one and, while she is an American, she is ignored by every American publication I have seen. And yet, she was regarded for many years as one of the greatest lieder singers in Europe. These discs, made in 1938, were the first she ever sang, and unfortunately remain the only ones. As with Marchesi, it was I who took the initiative of having them made, by urging her to perpetuate her unique artistry. For those who have not heard them I can describe her voice as a peculiarly colorful one. It is of the type of Marchesi, Lulu Mysz-Gmeiner, Povla Frijsh, and Slobodskaya. Her "Junge Nonne" of Schubert is particularly moving. Yet it is in the Fauré that for me she surpasses everyone else.

[Mention of Suzanne Metcalfe Casals can be found in Richard Aldrich's "Concert

Life in New York," G. T. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1941. In a review of a concert with her husband on January 9, 1916, Aldrich praises her artistry highly, stating: "Mrs. Casals' singing of Lieder is poetical and skillfully illustrative of their diverse sentiment and emotional significance, heightened often by admirable phrasing and vocal coloring."—Ed.]

11. GABRIELLE RITTER-CIAMPI. L'Amero' saro' costante from **Il Re Pastore** (Mozart), and **Sweet Bird** from **Il Penseroso** (Handel) (in French). Polydor 66841.

This is one of a series of records the singer made in Berlin in 1929. The disc was issued, I believe, at one time in the U.S.A. by Brunswick. The Handel aria is handicapped by the French translation, but the Mozart side contains some of the loveliest Mozart singing one could possibly wish to hear. It wins on all points compared with the records made by Rethberg, Schumann and all others I have heard. It is surprising that so great a singer has such a small following among collectors. On Pathé (sapphire-cut) she made "Come scoglio" from "Cosi fan tutte" that will come as a surprise to all who may hear it. The limpid beauty of Ritter-Ciampi's singing is something to be experienced, not talked about.

* * *

This last record leaves only a twelfth to be recommended. Somehow, I cannot do it. Chosing one would leave me with a heartache at leaving out all my beloved Supervia recordings (especially her Rossini arias, her "Oh, no John," and her ever so "morbidezza" filled "Occhietti amati"). Or again, all my Muzio records, so dear to my feelings, or the Sembrich ones like "Si mes vers avaient des ailes" (where the singing is like a thread of spun silver) or the Puritani aria with its wonderful chromatic cadenza (the next one to hint that she did not record well or that she sounded hooty will receive my invitation to a duel!), or little gems like Julia Culp's "Mignonette" or her Anker-record of "Auf fluegeln des Gesanges," or Florence Easton's IRCC song recital, or Roland Hayes' choice Columbia recordings, or Berta Kiurina's marvelous "Norma," or Lilli Lehmann's "Entfuehrung" aria, or Taüber's acoustic "Don Giovanni" aria, and ever so many Bori's, Farrar's, Lotte Lehmann's, Povla Frijsh's, Rosa Ponselle's . . . I'm afraid this could be continued endlessly. Of one thing I am certain, I will never go traipsing off to a desert island with a selection of a dozen discs. I shall stay put where I am and heaven willing, enjoy the whole of my vast collection for a long time to come.

EDITORIAL NOTES

(Continued from page 3

the equipment in use. That the position of the speaker in commercial machines is too close to the floor level for the assurance of the best reproduction is known by all sound technicians. The advantage gained by lifting the speaker to a height of four or five feet cannot be refuted, especially if it permits the sound reproduction a freedom of space, unhampered by furniture or other articles in a direct line, and if the machine is placed to utilize the advantages of sound travelling the full length of the room. This can be accomplished by a small platform on which the console is lifted, or better still by building a two or three foot bookcase to be placed under the machine. Those who use the bass-reflex cabinet are urged to do this for betterment of the tonal qualities on the low end. The bookcase is preferable to a platform as it serves a useful purpose.

"Reactions of various people who have followed our advice of lifting the speaker to ear level has been mixed. To the majority, the clarity of the sound was immediately noted and appreciated. To some who were irreparably ear-conditioned by muffled tones and excessive bass, the reproduction proved less pleasing to their ears. There were different viewpoints between husbands and wives (to be expected) with some of the latter objecting to the improved position of sound production purely on a basis of eye appeal. Others were highly gratified with the clearer reproduction and in a period of time not a few endorsed changing to custom-made equipment with the speakers mounted separately in another cabinet."

"Brain-conditioning" may not be admitted by men of science but it is suggested by the actions of some music listeners. Is it stretching a point too far to say that obstinacy is a case in point of "brain-conditioning"? Let us go back and read the second quoted paragraph by Mr. Baker. Some people are mentally opposed to the alteration of music's reproduction on the basis of a preconceived idea of

their own emotional response. It is a depressing thought to some people to think of altering the position of a small piece of furniture, much less a phonograph or radio. It is a well known scientific fact that when people "think of depressing and sad subjects(whether our thoughts are spontaneous or reflex)" that people feel depressed. This might be called "brain-conditioning." When the sensorium, functioning to hearing, has been subjected to preconceived thoughts whether harbored by the individual or instilled by another, an inner resistence to change has implanted. This, in the music listener, undeniably precludes appreciation of sound betterment.

It is is a curious fact that the appreciation of music has not been circumvented by inferior reproduction, though its greater enjoyment has been definitely affected. The development of "direct listening," by which we mean uninterrupted and concentrative listening, however, is hampered by inferior equipment which cannot do justice to the finer and more sensitive qualities of music.

The Appeal of Rhythm

Inasmuch as rhythm is a prime factor in music which affects our emotional nature, it is understandable why so many like music with strong rhythmic characteristics. Baker tells us that "we are probably affected by rhythm because rhythm is motion, and motion is life," and because "we cannot perceive life without motion, nor motion that is not life, — either active or passive." Is it an exaggeration then to say that rhythm offers the most obvious emotional appeal while harmony and melody in the finest sense, and its more subtle and intricate compounding — polyphony, require a more aspiring and intellectual response? We think not. "When music has nothing for its recommendation but its rhythm and perhaps a pleasing melody," as Baker adds, "it is of little use for elevating the mind, or strengthening the better part of our nature; for such music acts chiefly upon the motor and sensory nerves only, and may be truly said to serve the flesh more than the spirit."

Though the reproduction of the modern symphony orchestra from record on the average commercial equipment is a blurred representation of the original neither clarifying the finer characteristics of the music nor the true range of its dynamics, the orchestral record is nonetheless preferred by most to chamber music and vocal ones. There are many factors to make the melodic and rhythmic impulses of orchestral music more immediately enjoyable especially if the sentiment and emotion are pleasing. The listener who declines to concentrate on music, who uses it merely as an indulgence to his emotions, cannot expect to advance beyond the more obvious and most easily assimilated works. Such a listener is actually "ear-conditioned" in his aural response, whether he is ear-conditioned in the matter of tone reproduction or not.

This business of listening is decidedly intricate and complicated. It deserves further discussion.



COLLECTORS' RECORDS

HANDEL: Giustino—Vanne, si superba, và and **FAURE:** Fleur jetée; **Frederick Jagel,** (tenor) and **Robert Payson Hill** (piano). IRCC 3064, ten-inch disc, $1.75.

THIS DISC gives us a souvenir of an artist whose published recordings have hardly been fair to the versatility or the seriousness of his repertoire. Mr. Jagel has been one of the most useful and dependable artists at the Metropolitan for more than twenty years, and what he has lacked in glamor has been amply made up in intelligence and musicianship. This Handel is Jagel as we like to think of him, solid and convincing, tonally adequate if not sensuously appealing. In short, unlike many collectors' recordings, here is a case where the interpreter is happy to stand aside and give the glory to the composer. The traditional repeat carries the aria over to the second side of the disc, leaving about a half-side for the Fauré. Though once done perhaps more excitingly by Georges Thill, this impassioned song (with its "Erlkoenig" piano art) is not present in the domestic catalogues.—P.L.M.

BELLINI: La Sonnambula — Ah non credea mirarti; **DONIZETTI:** Don Pasquale—So anch' io la virtù magica; **Lucrezia Bori** (soprano) with orchestra (1913). IRCC 3061, $2.25.

WAGNER: Goetterdaemmerung — Immolation scene. **Gertrude Kappell** (soprano) with orchestra (1945), and Lohengrin—Du Aermste kannst wohl nie ermessen; **Frieda Hempel** (soprano) and **Felicie Kaschowska** (contralto) with orchestra (1922). IRCC 3062-63, 2 discs, $4 (sold only as a unit).

THE BORI record gives a very clear idea of the sweetness and delicacy of her voice in its early bloom and of the clean-cut, sculptured beauty of her style - the hallmark of her singing throughout her career. It shows, too, her own special way of treating florid passages and cadenzas, never brilliant or dazzling, substituting a certain intimacy for the grand manner - a device peculiarly in character in the music of Adina and Norina. So deftly and appealing did she manage all this that the fact that she never had a real trill is scarcely noticeable.

Operagoers of the twenties and early thirties will welcome the Kappell recording, as mementos of this fine artist have never before been offered in this country. Made at the end of the acoustical era, these three sides show a recording technique which was developing in Europe at that time, little realized today. A larger orchestra was used than our domestic companies favored indeed until well into the thirties, and a degree of realism was achieved that has not altogether faded today. As we old-timers (!) know, Kappell was gifted with an uncommonly lovely voice, and one of sufficient size fully to meet the demands of Wagner's vocal line against his orchestra. I do not believe she ever disappointed a listener or ever sang far below her admirable best. These records show her fine vocal material and sterling musicianship. What struck me forcibly on hearing the voice again was the ease and steadiness with which she mounted to the climaxes. What she lacked is apparent here too - the quality of excitement, the burning fire by which a Frida Leider could so easily eclipse her. This recording certainly belongs in the archives of Metropolitan Opera history.

The fourth-side filler has equal interest if of another kind. Perhaps, first mention should go to Felicie Kaschowska, an artist rare on records, and obviously one of the old school. Her part in the duet (she has no solo passage) is excellently matched with Hempel's, yet there is evidence of characterization and temperament as well as a good solid vocal quality. As for the soprano, this recording shows her in a not too familiar light. Though she sang such roles as Elsa, Eva and Elisabeth we think of her rather as Violetta, Gilda, The Queen of the Night, Susanna, Adina or Rosina. Light as it is in texture, the voice here is at once full and limpid, rising effortlessly to the climaxes. By 1922 her career at the Metropolitan was closed, yet she was obviously at the height of her vocal powers. —P.L.M.

STRAUSS: Staenchen, and Heimliche Aufforderung; **Richard Tauber** (tenor) with piano accompaniment. Vocal Art disc X503, price $2.50.

SCHUBERT: Fruehlingstraum, and Der Lindenbaum; **Heinrich Schlusnus** (baritone) with piano. Vocal Art disc V502, price $2.50.

PUCCINI: Turandot — Non piangere, Liu, and Nessun Dorma; **Alfred Piccaver** (tenor) with Vienna State Opera Orch., conducted by **Julius Pruewer.** Vocal Art disc V500 price $2.50.

WAGNER: Die Meistersinger — Am stillen Herd, and Preislied; **Leo Slezak** (tenor) with Vienna State Opera Orch. Vocal Art disc V504, price $2.50.

BRAHMS: Staenchen, Op. No. 1; and **HILDACH:** Der Lenz; **Leo Slezak** with Vienna State Opera Orch. Vocal Art 10-inch disc V50, price $1.75.

NO CLUE to the date of the recordings is given, which remains a mistake. All are acoustics, made perhaps in the years following World War I. The recordings are good, even the orchestra comes through in a better than average manner for the period. The dubbings are clear and tonally good, but the surfaces of the old records are apparent even though the material used is black vinylite.

Tauber, prior to the middle 1920s, was one of the best lieder singers in Germany. His singing of "Heimliche Aufforderung" is velvet-toned throughout and most expressive. There is a lack of spontaneity in

(Continued on page 64)



RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS



ANDERSON: Sleigh Ride, and Serenata; **Boston Pops Orchestra,** conducted by Arthur Fiedler. Victor 10" disc 10-1484, $1.00.

▲ Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride" is as slickly descriptive as Grofe's "On the Trail," and a lot more fun—maybe because the horse seems more alive than the burro. Anyone who ever enjoyed an old fashioned sleigh ride will be intrigued with this piece, which Fiedler plays wth zest. The "Serenata," aiming for a more torrid clime, doesn't jell so well; in comparison it's ersatz stuff. Even Fiedler with his clean phrasing and avoidance of sentimentalizing can't make it rear its head above its companion, which rightfully deserved the "A" side of the disc. Swell recording.
P. G.

BRAHMS: Hungarian Dance — No. 1 in G minor and No. 3 in F major; **The London Symphony Orchestra,** conducted by **Clemens Krauss.** London 10" disc R. 10111, $1.00.

▲ Those recent performances of Brahms' "Hungarian Dances" by Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony are fresh in mind. His avoidance of "traditionl 'artistic' maunderings" substantiated the charm of the music, as A.W.P. noted in review. Krauss seems to prefer a liberal use of rubati and a more sentimental approach, just the sort of performance one would expect to hear from the Viennese radio. The edge in recording lies with Krauss—those English-made recordings of London have the proper acoustic resonance and tonal qualities.
—P. G.

BIZET: Patrie—Overture; **National Symphony Orchestra** conducted **by Roger Desormiere.** London set LA-102, 2 discs, $5.00.

THE superb recording serves the music to great advantage; it is clear and well-balanced and richly resonant—a fine example of London engineering. Moreover, the performance of Desormiere—one of the great French conductors of all time (he conducted the performance of "Pelleas and Melisande," made by French H. M.V. during the war)—is both musically precise and sensitive. He does much to make this work a vital and enjovable one —an older performance by Sargent (issued in 1930) failed to sustain interest in the score for me.

"Patrie" was composed in 1873 and is therefore contemporary to Bizet's "Carmen." The notes to the set intimate that "the inspiration of the music lay in the emotions aroused by the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71," but this does not concur with the facts known to me of its creation. The Parisian conductor, Jules Pasdeloup, commissioned three composers to write overtures in 1873 — Bizet, Massenet and Giraud. The Massenet work, "Phèdre Overture," has survived in the concert hall while the Giraud and the Bizet have been neglected. In my estimation, the Bizet work is a better opus than the Massenet; I know nothing, however, of the Giraud one.

Bizet's overture, according to facts accessible to me, was founded on the Sardou drama "Patrie," which was based "on the rising of the Dutch 'gueux' (destitute)

at the end of the 16th century. Inasmuch as the annotator claims the composer at one time thought of calling the work "Episode of the Polish War," it may be that Sardou's "Patrie" was an afterthought, or possibly Bizet also had it in mind before he penned the score. Too, the fact that no hint of Russian or Polish themes are in evidence, as the annotator states, gives acceptance to its relation to the Sardou drama. Though there is some prolixity in this score, it remains nonetheless a striking example of Bizet's dramatic writing.

—P. H. R.

CHABRIER: Fete Polonaise from "Le Roi Malgre Liu"; **San Francisco Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Pierre Monteux.** Victor disc 12-1978, price $1.25.

▲ Little by little, we are getting modern recordings of Chabrier's superb orchestral work. This performance by Monteux and the San Francisco Orchestra is enormously exciting and should be the definitive version of this work for a long time to come. This record, I believe, contains the finest playing that this orchestra has yet given us. Surfaces and recording are excellent.

—C.J.L.

DEBUSSY: Images pour Orchestre; **L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande** conducted by **Ernest Ansermet.** London LP 44, price $5.95.

AT last here is a superb performance and recording of Debussy's great masterwork "Iberia," No. 2 of the "Images pour Orchestre." Ernest Ansermet, in my opinion the world's foremost conductor of impressionistic music, has outstripped all other recording rivals and London has preserved his work with the greatest fidelity.

London has not been so successful, however, with Ansermet's fine performances of "Gigues" and "Rondes de Printemps," Nos. 1 and 3 of the "Images." Neither has the orchestra. The recording of these portions is veiled and fuzzy in sound, and the orchestra's playing is, unfortunately, no better than its usual recorded standard. L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, apparently a second-rate organization, helped to keep Ansermet's "La Mer" from being the definitive recorded version and now their lack of response and their technical lapses have conspired against another great reading of two wonderful works that never get played and that need, for that reason, the best of everything. It's all a great pity.

I give my thanks, nonetheless, for what must be for them inspired playing in "Iberia," that endlessly fascinating evocation of the whole sensuous Spanish panorama.

—C.J.L.

DOPPER: Gothic Chaconne (5 sides) and **ROENTGEN:** Old Netherland Dances, Op. 46 (1 side); **Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra,** conducted by **Willem Mengelberg.** Capitol-Telefunken Album ECL-8031, 3 discs, $5.00, or LP disc P-8037, $4.85.

CORNELIES DOPPER (1870-1939) is a Hollander who for many years was assistant conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, during the regime of Mengelberg. He also did some composing, and this piece, actually entitled "Ciacona Gothica," apparently his best-known work, enjoyed some popularity on middle-Europe concert programs in the twenties. The Philadelphia Orchestra (Stokowski) introduced it to this country in 1926.

It is a solid score, flavored with model conceits in such a way as to sometimes recall earlier scores of Vaughan Williams, though the sonorous contrapuntal figures of late German romanticism are the basis of the structure. Do not pass this album by merely because the composer is unknown in this country. No one would be tempted to claim that this is an important work, yet few, I believe, having heard it, would brand it uninteresting.

Mengelberg's (and Dopper's) orchestra sounds very well. This was evidently a labor of love, a tribute to the old gentlemen who had been their colleague for such a long period. The recording is rich and full, the surfaces unobtrusive. The sixth side conforms to the requirements of a filler; it takes four and a half minutes to play.

—A. W. P.

FRANCAIX: Concertino for Piano and Orchestra; **Jean Francaix (piano)** and the **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra,** conducted by **Leo Borchard.** Capitol-Telefunken disc 89-80108, price $1.25.

IN the late thirties Jean Francaix was one of the most talked of composers of the younger generation in France. Since that time we have heard little of his activities, so that it is a pleasure to be able to report that the Polish basso Doda Conrad will introduce new material by Francaix at his Town Hall recital this season.

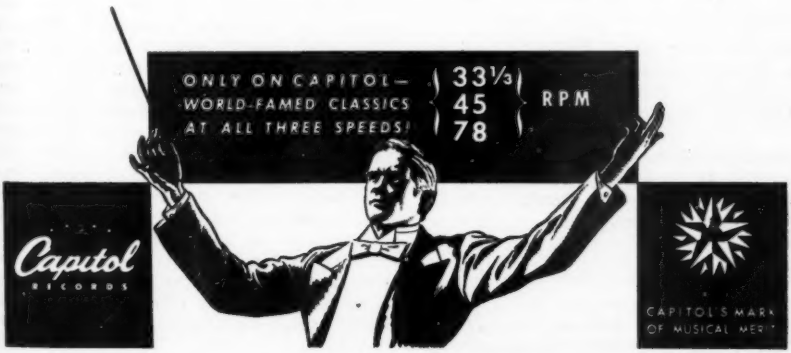
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Although Francaix belongs to a different camp from Les Six, being a student of Mlle. Boulanger, his style is similar to that of Poulenc, with a touch of Ibert's saltiness included.

This little piece is a companion to Honegger's "Concertino", once recorded by Eunice Norton and the Minneapolis Symphony (Victor disc 8765, withdrawn). It is more sparkling and wittier than Francaix's more ambitious "Concerto for Piano and Orchestra" (Victor 15114/5 withdrawn, still listed by HMV as DB5034/5). How Francaix came to make this disc in Berlin, I do not know. His style of playing is ideal for the character of the work, and the late Leo Borchard provides alert support.

The original Telefunken disc was much in demand here just before the war. Hostilities cut off the source of supply, which was never adequate. It is therefore very cheerful news that this record, once a collector's item, is now generally available to all. The engineering will not bring smiles to the faces of high-fidelity enthusiasts, but it is clear enough for practical purposes. A.W.P.

FRANCK: Symphony in D Minor; **Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam** conducted by **Willem Mengelberg.** Capitol-Telefunken set EEL-8023, five discs, price $7.50, also LP disc, $4.85.

MENGELBERG gives, for him, a surprisingly correct performance of this well-known work. He keeps things moving most of the time, doesn't let his brass rant at the climaxes, and is tempted only two or three times into unnecessary expansion and contraction of dynamics. Best of all, he does not exaggerate the pretentiousness of this ponderous work.

His orchestra plays splendidly and for once Capitol-Telefunken has given us truly quiet surfaces. The recording is up to the best pre-war standards. —C.J.L.

GLAZOUNOFF: Symphony No. 4 in E flat, Op. 48; **Symphony Orchestra of the Academy of St. Cecilia, Rome,** conducted by **Jacques Rachmilovitch.** Capitol set ECL-8027, 3 discs, $5.00, or LP disc (10") L-8027, $3.85.

GLAZOUNOFF: Concerto in A minor, Op. 826 **Nathan Milstein** (violin) and **RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra,** conducted **by William Steinberg.** Victor set DM-1315 (3) discs, $5.00.

IN THE OPENING decade of this century, Glazounoff's symphonies were heard quite frequently in the concert hall. Of the eight symphonies he wrote, the Fourth (dating from 1893) gained considerable popularity in its day and is regarded by many commentators as the freshest and most compact work. Its lyrical utterance has a buoyancy and some colorful scoring, and none of the tiresome prolixity of his Third Symphony. Though it has qualities liking it to the Russian school, more particularly Tchaikovsky in his earlier days, it reveals the influence of Western European music. Glazounoff was a cosmolitan who had some traits in common with Tchaikovsky — instrumental coloring and a classic bent. It is of interest that Stravinsky frankly admits his first symphony was in imitation of Glazounoff's music. Such was the high esteem the composer held in 1905-07.

I cannot recall when I have listened to Glazounoff symphony with more pleasure than I did to this recording. Though it is not music that I should feel impelled to return to often, the spontaneity of Rachmilovich's conception, the freshness and vigor he substantiates, and the freedom from sentiment makes his performance one which is enjoyable and praiseworthy. Moreover, the recording, made last spring, is exceptionally good, well balanced and tonally bright if lacking in the fullest resonance. LP has an edge on the 78 version.

The Glazounoff violin concerto has long been a staple in the concert repertoire. It is full of gratifying lyrical utterance (hardly distinguished for variety or richness) with "soft, juicy chromaticisms" prevailing in its harmonic and melodic lines and plenty of technical virtuosity. Milstein plays this work with a lustrous tone, handling its various characteristics with the aplomb of the finished artist; and Steinberg backs him with a solid, full-bodied orchestral background, in which the soloist is sometimes too much submerged. Whether this is the result of microphone placement or the wish of the violinist remains problematical. As a recording, this performance is an advance over the old Heifetz set, but the latter has its attributes. For Heifetz seems more particularly suited temporamentally to this music and certainly brings more individuality to his performance. —P. H. R.

KABALEVSKY: Symphony No. 2 in C minor. Op. 19; **Symphony Orchestra of the Academy of St. Cecilia, Rome,** conducted by **Jacques Rachmilovich.** Capitol set ECL-8032, 3 discs, $5.00, or LP disc (10") L8032, $3.85.

THIS Russian fare has some of the strong pulsations inherent to Vodka. Its nervous, driving agitation is strong tonic. At no point in the symphony does the composer abate the compulsion of his creative urge, not even in the slow movement where he achieves a genuine expressiveness and a hint of anguish. Record buyers who know Kabalevsky's overture to his opera "Colas Breugnon" and his suite "The Commedians" will undoubtedly welcome this work, already familiar in this country in performances by Toscanini and others. There is no doubt that it has caught the public's fancy. Though Kabalevsky follows in the traditions of the older school of Russian. (Gerald Abraham says the Tchaikovsky traditiion, but others find hints of Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakoff in his music) I mark him as a true disciple of his teacher Miaskovsky. The opening movement is emotionally exciting but lacking in sufficient contrast to stimulate intellectual interest. The finale, a dancing scherzo, owns a fiery impetuosity which in repeated performances has proved the most engaging part of the symphony. The slow movement, however, has a dramatic fervor and distinctive individuality.

Rachmilovich's knowledge of orchestral technique enables him to achieve an interpretation equally as impelling as his Glazounoff. His is an innate musical instinct with an unmistakable feeling for and appreciation of Russian music. Capitol would do well to engage him for other performances. The recording while clear and lifelike is less persuasive in the 78 version than the Glazounoff, for this is the type of score which fares best when heard in a more resonant hall. The LP is definitely a better job. Though the slow movement, is broken midway. —P.H.R.

LECUONA: Andalucia; **MORGANSTERN:** Toccata Guatemala; **PROKOFIEFF:** Peter and the Wolf - Procession; **STRAUSS, J.:** Die Fiedermaus - Waltzes; played by the **Philharmonic Piano Quartet.** Columbia set MM-852, three discs, price $4.00.

▲ When one takes a simple melody together with its ingenuous, elementary accompaniment and divides up the available



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notes among eight hands, the results will be much the same as if eight painters were assigned to do equal portions of your portrait. The arranger, erstwhile conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra, has padded these exercises with all reasonable doublings and added thirds, but he is not clever enough to disguise the inherent weakness of the medium. It sounds like an expensive, well-oiled player piano.

It is incomprehensible why these revolting concoctions have been released on the Masterworks label. At best little more than a mediocre night-club turn, these performances should have been assigned to the popular category. A.W.P.

MESSIAEN: L'Ascension, Four Symphonic Meditations for Orchestra (coupled with **VAUGHAN WILLIAMS:** Symphony No. 6 in E minor); **Philharmonic Symphony of New York,** conducted by **Leopold Stokowski.** Columbia Microgroove disc ML-4214, price $4.85.

LAST month's first sampling of Oliver Messiaen's output ("Trois Liturgies de la Presence Divine", reviewed in Recent Importations) was very disappointing, for much was expected of the man whom some enlightened critics are grooming for the post of white hope of France's younger generation of composers. "L'Ascension," on the other hand, is a vital and compelling work, a powerful distillation of religious intensity, concentrated mysticism and ecstasy. Much has been made of Messaien's preoccupation with religious matters in his music; undoubtedly this is as valid example as exists of the genuine force of this absorption, its uncompromising zeal in glorifying the transcendental beauties of his beliefs.

The four movements that make up "L'Ascension" were originally organ works that Messiaen later transcribed for orchestra. The opening section, described as being for full orchestra by the author of the accompanying notes is apparently for brass choir alone. Entitled "Majesty of Christ Beseeching His Glory of His Father" (John 17:1), it is a stark, hymn-like prelude reminiscent - except for the harmonic structure - of Cesar Franck's style.

The middle movements, "Serene Hallelujahs of a Soul that Yearns for Heaven" and "Hallelujah on the Trumpet. Hallelujah on the Cymbal", employ the resources of full orchestra. The finale - to me the least affecting section - is for strings alone. It is entitled "Prayer of Christ Ascending to His Father."

Stokowski's reading is unblemished by interpretative excursions, and the orchestra gives a stunning performance. The tone quality of the brass is particularly commendable. The recording is excellent, not as brilliant as some of the recent British efforts, but very clean and mellow.

This microgroove disc is a sensational bargain. No serious collector should pass it by. You get two unbroken major compositions of recent date played in exemplary fashion, works that from prima facie evidence have every hope of surviving the fickle loyalties of public acceptance.

— A. W. P.

MOZART: Masonic Funeral Music, K. 477; **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra,** conducting by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia disc 72846-D, price $1.00.

A LACK of instrumental clarity and the woolly quality of the strings retards fullest appreciation of one of Mozart's deeply and intensely felt compositions, which was written in 1786 at the death of two distinguished brother Masons — the Duke of Mecklenberg and Count Esterhazy. This opus, which Sackville West aptly describes as "a tourchlit processional piece, in the grand style of the 'Adagio and Fugue in C minor'," is in the form of a solemn march and a consolatory chorale that is hauntingly beautiful. The performance is one of dignity and nobility, well controlled throughout, and certainly deserving of better engineering. Years ago Leo Blech performed this music (Electrola EJ496) and more recently Maurice Hewitt on a Discophiles Francais disc. Of the three conductor's von Karajan affirms its "quiet nobility" more convincingly, his tempi lying between the faster pace of Blech and the protracted time of Hewitt. —P. H. R.

PFITZNER: Palestrina — Preludes to Act I, II and III; **German Philharmonic Orchestra of Prague,** conducted by **Joseph Keilberth.** Capitol-Telefunken Album ECL-8025, 3 discs, $5.00, or LP disc P-8037, $4.85, coupled with **Dopper** "Gothic Chaconne."

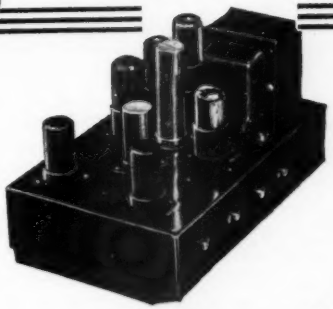
IF ONE excepts the output of the late Richard Strauss, by now accepted into the august circle of master composers, the experimenters Berg, von Webern, etc., and the expatriates Hindemith, Toch and Schoenberg, there are very few works of

20th-century German composers attractive to international appetites available on records. In addition to these preludes to the opera "Palestrina," once recorded by the composer and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra (Polydor 95459/61), one calls to mind Paul Graener's "Die Floete von Sanssouci" (Polydor 15011/2), a well-made piece of uncompromising sincerity for flute and chamber orchestra; the promising "Musik fuer Orchester" of Rudolph Stefan (Odeon 9132/3), not yet thirty when he was killed in World War I; Kurt Weill's "Dreigroschenoper" (selections on Telefunken A752/5); add an isolated aria from Korngold's opera "Die tote Staedt" (in Columbia album X-294). The bombastic efforts of von Schillings and Schreker, slavish imitators of Wagnerian formulae, though well represented in German catalogs, do not repay attention.

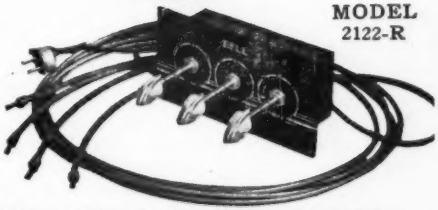
Pfitzner, who died only last spring, belongs in that unenviable group of composers whose works are very popular in their native land but are pointedly ignored elsewhere. Of course, he is not in such bad company, for Elgar, Nielsen, Fauré and Malipiero, to name but a few, are charter members of that unhappy band. Due to the strong nationalistic sympathies evoked by his music, Pfitzner has ranked second only to Strauss among living German composers. His cause in other lands, however, has not been aided by the overzealous protestations of his rabid circle of his admirers, who aver that his opera "Palestrina," first performed in 1917, is a fitting successor to "Parsifal." As a typical example of foreign judgement, an authoritative American encyclopedia deplores his "uninspired . . . and traditional romanticism . . . stodgily intricate and heavy in its scoring."

Either the excepts now under scrutiny are far superior to the mean of his output, or the standard opinions of Pfitzner's worth are tragically inaccurate, just as in the case of Reger, damned to exile on the musty shelf of pedagogy by the unsympathetic writings of a few influential critics. While Pfitzner's style in these pieces stems from the Reger — Mahler sphere of influence, it has a quality all of its own, a feeling of disembodied, dry austerity devoid of much of the traditional saccharinity of German romanticism. Instruments are employed sparingly and with sagacity, a nice touch being the use of four viole d'amore in the opening movement.

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Keilberth, formerly conductor of the Karlsruhe opera, gives a sympathetic, intelligent reading. His orchestra is adequate for the purpose at hand, and the recording is well enough done. I respectfully commend this album to your serious attention, not only because it is the lone available example of a whole era of music-making, but also because of the pleasurable nature of the music itself. —A. W. P.

RAVEL: Mother Goose Suite; **Andre Kostelanetz** and his orchestra. Columbia set MX-320, two discs, price $3.00.

IT may come as a slight shock to some when they note the name of Kostelanetz coupled with one of the most sophisticated works of the modern French school. Actually, the genial Andre does not make out too badly in this assignment. His interpretation is straight-forward and without affectation, but the rapid tempo are a bit hard on the nerves, causing the piece as a whole to assume a breathless, naive character that is foreign to its requirements.

Of course, I was brought up on Uncle Serge Koussevitzky's reading (now in Victor album DM-1268), so that I must have a strong sub-conscious resistance to a less weightly treatment. Kostelantz's orchestra, no slouch among local bands, is heard to advantage. The recording is clear and well defined. A.W.P.

REGER: Serenade for Orchestra, Opus 95; **Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra,** conducted by **Eugen Jochum.** Capitol-Telefunken album ECL-8026, 5 discs, $7.50, or LP disc P-8026, $4.85.

THE ACQUISITION of Telefunken's comprehensive recorded library by Capitol has brought a number of scores to attention of the American music-listening public that it otherwise might never have heard, for the programming of late German romantics is decidedly out of fashion in this country, possibly because there are very few conductors of German origin now in command of the nation's orchestras. Reger's "Boecklin Suite," released by Capitol during the summer, and this "Serenade" are cases in point.

History books generally refer to Reger as a great musical architect, a professorial type who relentlessly manufactured endless many-voiced fugues, countless sets of variations and other classroom ammunition. While this is true up to a point, Reger can not be so easily pigeon-holed, for his list of works is as varied as it is lengthy. Immersed in the overwhelming quantity of his output are a number of works of quality which deserve to be pulled down from his shelf and dusted off for closer examination.

This "Serenade," though it bears a high opus number, is an early work for orchestra, as Reger spent many years turning out chamber pieces and organ music. There are four movements in contrasting moods; there is no fugue. Granted it's a bit too long for its own good and that its emotional content is consistently shallow, this unpretentionus score is easy listening.

Jochum, conductor of the Hamburg Philharmonic before the war, handles his assignment capably and has received suitable attention from the recording engineers. —A. W. P.

SAINT-SAENS: Danse Macabre, Op. 40; **Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam** conducted by **Charles Muench.** London FFRR disc. T. 5120, price $2.10.

▲ Never before have I heard this piece sound so wonderful! Muench makes it glow with his personal excitement that is, on this occasion, under complete control. The Concertgebouw Orchestra is wonderfully responsive and produces some truly extraordinary sonorities. If all this is not enough to get you exicted about the record, then hear that the recording is sensational, the surfaces smooth. Bravo, Muench; bravo, London! —C. J. L.

SIBELIUS: Tapiola — Symphonic Poem, Op. 112; **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra,** conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham.** Victor set 1311, 2 discs, price $2.0.

THERE are two schools of thought on whether Sibelius' music is vital and interesting and whether his handling of orchestration is good or bad. There are those who contend his orchestral coloring is "gray and dirty brown" while others contend it is a clear as "pure spring water." Neither assumption is true. The first contention derives from a complete dislike of the composer's music, the latter from a true lack of understanding of orchestral coloring. Sibelius does use brown and gray hues in his instrumentation, but they are intensified in their color and hardly lacking in tonal richness. Gauguin, in "Intimate Journal," tells a story of an older painter who sought to change the bold and bright colors of one of his paintings, claiming



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MILSTEIN—*Concerto in A Minor, Op. 82* and *Meditation, Op. 32*—Glazounoff. RCA Victor Orchestra, William Steinberg, Conductor. Three records.

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the grays and browns applied to the canvas relieved an undesirable brilliancy. Gauguin's expression of disdain was as gauche as it was natural. Were someone to apply brighter coloring to Sibelius' scores, he would be right in resenting it. One either accepts Sibelius on his own premise or not at all.

"Tapiola," like the "Seventh Symphony," has always appealed to me as a striking opus of concentrative development. Its architecture is as individual as its orchestration. Tovey says "the music is quintessential Sibelius." It is one of the most striking works of its kind, describable "as a vast and slow crescendo to a climax." Constructed out of one theme, its evolutions "correspond unerringly to the evolutions of the poetic idea" (Ernest Newman). There have been two other performances of this work on records—an early Kajanus one and a more recent Koussevitzky one. The latter was a beautiful sounding performance though less penetrating in interpretative perceptions than the former in which the orchestral coloring was far less persuasive. For my own part, Beecham with his uncanny feeling for melodic phrase and expressive sensitivity gives a performance that remains far more illuminating and satisfying. To be sure, it is exceptionally well recorded and the Royal Philharmonic produces sounds that are equally as fine as those of the Boston Orchestra. It is a pity that this rendition is not heard as an unbroken performance from an long-playing record, for the cummulative crescendo losses in its climatic effect when interrupted by the several breaks. —P. H. R.

STRAVINSKY: Jeu de Cartes (The Card Game); **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Igor Stravinsky.** Capitol-Telefunken set FCL-8038, three discs, price $5.00 also 10" LP, $3.85.

THOSE who have not witnessed a Stravinsky-Balanchine ballet have missed one of the wonders of our age. They have also missed perhaps the greatest of Stravinsky's gifts to this century—"danceable" music of wit, fancy, and expression that, when used by such a master as Balanchine, is nothing short of amazing.

The Card Game, subtitled "a ballet in three deals," is made well and sounds well. Though it does not represent one of the high points of the Russian-born master's career, the work nevertheless contains many of Stravinsky's typically magical flights of imagination. Much of this magic is apparent in the consecutive and cumulative surprises that hold the listener's attention from point to point. Such workmanship, such variety of fancy cannot fail to delight those who remember the ballet and those who are familiar enough with Balanchine's work to imagine what the great cheoreographer might do with such music.

Stravinsky's conducting on these records is lively and controlled and Berlin Philharmonic's playing is quite good. The recording, if a bit dry in sound, is clear and well-balanced. With all of these merits, it is a pity that many surfaces are afflicted with swishes and sundry other disconcerting noise. --C.J.L

WAGNER: Lohengrin - Preludes to Act I and III; Tannhauser - Overture; **Orchestra of the German Opera House, Berlin** and the **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra,** conducted by **Eugen Jochum.** Capitol-Telefunken set 8024, $5.00.

WAGNER: Die Meistersinger - Prelude to Act III; **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Eugen Jochum.** Capitol-telefunken 89-80111, price $1.25.

▲ These discs were probably made after 1940, for neither orchestra plays with prewar tone quality and precision. Jochum's "Tannhauser" reading is very effective, however; it has plenty of dramatic urgency. The other pieces must be graded as routine. The engineers have faithfully picked up the edgy string tone and rough brass playing that are in evidence, adding a fair share of distortion on occasion. There are a couple of dandy crescendi, aside from which the engineers have done little to cover themselves with glory.

Owners of the N. Y. Philharmonic—Toscanini "Lohengrin" discs (Victor 14006/7) and the Beecham "Tannhauser" (Columbia set X-123) can remain secure in the knowledge that they have the best available domestically. The only other recording of the "Meistersinger" excerpt now listed is by Reiner and the Pittsburghers (in Columbia set X-218). This is a piece that even anti-Wagnerians will admit contains some of the most telling pages of that composer's varied output. It lasts more than seven minutes, yet requires only eleven pages of scoring, most of which are more than half innocent of notes. In the Jochum version, some officious dogooder has tacked on a fancy ending that is, to be charitable, superfluous. —A.W.P.

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The Record Hunter

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CHOPIN: Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor (Op. 11); played by **Alexander Brailowsky** (piano) with the **RCA Victor Orchestra** conducted by **William Steinberg.** Victor set WDM-1317, 4 45-RPM discs, price $4.30.

PREVIOUSLY on domestic releases, we have had Kilenyi and Rubenstein, the latter far superior to the former. This is Brailowsky's second recording of the score. His old version with the Berlin Philharmonic, for Polydor, a notable set in its day, must be almost a generation old. Brailowsky was playing better then than today: he was more in love with his instrument, less capricious and brittle.

His new performance is not exactly memorable. Steady, reliable, technically expert, it also is hard and steely. Brailowsky often has a tendency to fall into a given dynamic level of playing and stay there. Little tonal gradation is present, and there is none of the shaping of phrases that Rubenstein displays. Admittedly the new set is superior as a recording—it is, indeed, one of Victor's best piano-orchestra albums, barring some undue surface noise, while the Rubenstein set shows its age (about a dozen years). Too, the piano part is complete, without the last-movement cuts Rubenstein adopted. Thus the Brailowsky-Steinberg collaboration may attract many listeners. Talking about cuts, it should be pointed out that the orchestral introduction to the first movement is sadly truncated— more, even, than is customary.

The music still holds its own. Period charm alone does not account for its fascination, which is partly compounded of solo writing that is a challenge to any pianist, a poetical and wistful slow movement, and the sturdy opening theme of the first movement, which Chopin adopted from Hummel's "A minor Concerto." Chopin was to write greater music as he grew older, but in this early concerto all the elements of his mastery are present, and they must have come as a shock to his contemporaries, still piddling along with predominantly diatonic harmonies and virtually no idea of what could be done with the resources of the piano.

—H.C.S.



CHOPIN: Sonata in G Minor for Cello Piano; **Gregor Piatigorsky,** cellist; **Ralph Berkowitz,** pianist. Columbia set MM-854, three discs, price $4.00

ACCORDING to my encyclopedias this is the first complete performance of this work to be recorded. I cannot understand why everyone took so long to make it available. Cellists are perpetually crying for more pieces to play and record.

Those who think that Chopin was a great musical innovator and creator (and there are a lot of those people myself included) will certainly want to know this work—the last of the Polish master's large-scale products. Our thanks then to Piatigorsky for ressurecting it and to Columbia for recording it.

This cello sonata is not one of Chopin's greatest works, I think, because of the piece's lack of a sense of destination. There never seems to be a strong, unfaltering direction to give the musical detail coherence and shape. There are a multitude of charming moments—a lovely melody here, an effective modulation there—that seem to spring from passionate, mature poetic impulses. But beyond these sporadic utterances of beauty there seems to be little else.

The performance in this recording appears to be satisfactory, but I have a feeling that it might have been more effective had Piatigorsky paid a little more attention to rhythmic clarity. Had he done this, he might have chosen to adopt a faster vibrato that would have helped to produce a tone of lighter, easier-to manage weight. Ralph Berkowitz gives the soloist adequate support. The recording is acceptable; the surface are excellent.

—C. J. L.

RECORDER AND HARPSICHORD RECITAL: Sonata in A major (Handel); Le Rossignol en amour (Couperin); Three Bird Pieces (Cosyns, Farnaby and Mundy); Three Elizabethan Pieces (Farnaby, Anon); **Carl Dolmetsch** (recorder) and **Joseph Saxby**

(harpsichord). London LP 10" disc LPS -24, $3.85.

▲ A review of all except the Handel sonata appeared in our August issue (p. 378). I do not believe this work has been previously recorded, and it is good to have it performed so eloquently in the manner of Handel's time. Dolmetsch is a most accomplished performer on the recorder and the consistently beautiful tone he produces is a joy to the ear. The LP version is excellent and well worth acquiring.

—P. H. R.

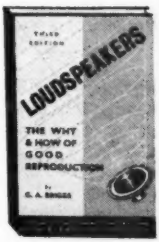
HAYDN: Quartet in D major, Op. 64, No. 5; **Budapest String Quartet.** Columbia set MM-853, 3 discs, $4.00, or LP disc ML-4216, coupled with Quartet in B flat, Op. 76, No. 4, $4.85.

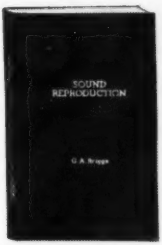
THERE is some mighty fine fiddling in these two performances, backed up by clear, clean recording quality. Both works are among Haydn's best quartets. The "D major," called "The Lark" because of the violin thrills in the first movement, has a particularly expressive slow movement and a minuet of unusually sensitive workmanship. I must profess to find the sobriquet far fetched and I doubt that Haydn had any bird in mind when he wrote it. The "B flat Quartet," called the "Sunrise" because of the rising characteristic of the opening melody, is an incomparably beautiful work (the works of Op. 76 are all among Haydn's ripest quartet writing). It has a masterful opening movement and its sobriquet is not remiss in its implied description. Haydn strikes less deeply in his slow movement than in the "D major" though there is a noble dignity to this Adagio. The menuet is a rustic dance and the finale, with its quickening tempi at the end, an exciting ending.

The Budapest ensemble are in fine fettle and the overall effect of both performances remains highly satisfying. The inner voices, especially from the second violin and viola, are sometimes not as clearly outlined as they might have been. Roisman's first violin tends to dominate throughout, but it should be noted his playing is consistently expressive and often sensitive.

In only one point am I in disagreement with the interpretation of either work, and that is in the rapid tempi of the finale of the "D major." Such a tempi tends to make this brilliant "perpetuum mobile" dangerously close to what one group of players calls a "lunatic's scramble." But

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Roisman and his group play every note cleanly and efficiently, though one has the feeling they were perspiring freely at the end. The LP version remains my preference; both works are performed uncut and with repeats. —P. H. R.

SAINT-SAENS: The Swan; and **MYRONOFF:** Caprice; **William Primrose** (viola) with David Stimer at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1476, price $1.00, or 7-inch disc 49-0474, price 95c.

▲ The recording of both these pieces sounds as if they were accomplished in a telephone booth. Primrose's viola hugs the mike and the piano of Stimer sounds almost wooden. The tone of Saint-Saens is full and lush, while in the Myronoff it is more virile and coarse. Obviously the violist is using different instruments. I like more serenity and less sensuality in "The Swan." Of the many solo recordings of this piece none has quite equaled the Casals performance in my estimation. The Myronoff is the sort of technical show which conveys little or no meaning to me. As a virtuoso piece, it serves well the violist and undoubtedly provokes applause in the concert hall. A better balanced recording would have served it more advantageously. --J.N.



BACH: Fifteen Two Part Inventions; **Ralph Kirkpatrick,** clavichordist. Concert Hall Society Limited Edition set C6, three discs.

▲ It was a fine idea of Concert Hall to give to its subscribers this well recorded version of the Two Part Inventions played on the clavichord.

It is unfortunate, however, that many of Kirkpatrick's performances are so cold, so lifeless, so bumpy fingered. There are few exciting phraseological inflections and few times when rhythms emerge lively and clear. Furthermore, the execution in certain places is messy in a way that makes me think that Kirkpatrick had perhaps not practiced as much as he should have.

The recording is superb and the vinylite surfaces are virtually noiseless. —C. J. L.

CHASINS: Fledermaus Fantasy, Artist's Life, Blue Danube (after themes by **Johann Strauss**); Carmen Fantasy (on themes by **Bizet**); **Abram Chasins** and **Constance Keene** (duo-pianists). Mercury LP disc MG 1005, $4.85.

TO DOUBT there is ample precedent for this sort of exercise—the contriving of complicated and fanciful arrangements of -pleasingly familiar melodies for the edification of those who have neither the opportunity nor the inclination to seek out the original in its unembellished form. Liszt turned out these potboilers by the dozen, using as fodder excerpts from operas such as "Faust" and "Rigoletto," songs of Schubert and Schumann, and practically everything else he could lay his hand to. In the case of this disc, there is the further excuse that the two-piano repertory is woefully limited, that any legitimate arrangement of a worthwhile score adaptable to this medium should be fair game.

Abram Chasins, however, is no Franz Liszt. To be sure, he has filled up his scores with as many notes as twenty human fingers can encompass in the span of time involved. Most of these signify nothing, but are included as justification for the use of a second piano.

The performance itself is far from first rate. The players have that annoying amateurish habit (also shared by some of our well-known conductors) of speeding up when the music gets loud, slowing when a piano sign appears around a bend. I have heard plenty of cafe pianists who do better, day after day, with only one piano. To hear how it's done, listen to the album of Strauss waltzes played by Carmen Cavallero. —A.W.P.

CHOPIN: Berceuse, Op. 57 and Etudes, Op. 25, Nos. 1 and 2; **Friedrich Gulda,** pianist. London disc T. 5123, price $2.10.

Though Friedrich Gulda demonstrates on this record that he is a music-maker of some merit, he fails to give complete satisfaction. His work is marred for me by several nervous time changes and a lack of a mastery over color and dynamics. These time changes, which occur at various points in all three works, are particularly harmful to the "Berceuse," which should have no interruptions of its quiet flow. —C.J.L.

CHOPIN: Fantasy in F minor; Fantasy-Impromptu; Barcarolle; played by **Gyorgy Sandor** (piano). Columbia set MM-847, three discs, price $3.95.

THE CHOPIN CENTENNIAL is upon us, and one can hope that some needed Chopin recordings materialize. It is true that the Pole is well represented on discs, but many of the latter are in need of re-recording. The only available versions of the Scherzos and Ballades, for example, date back quite a few years, while Brailowsky's recording of the "B minor Sonata" is pre-war. And, up to the present album, the great "F minor Fantasy" was available domestically only through the dated Marguerite Long (unsatisfactory) and Cortot discs.

On any list of what Huneker used to call "the greater Chopin," the "F minor Fantasy" would have to be placed. Chopin never wrote a greater piece—not even the "F minor Ballade", not even the first movement of the B flat minor Sonata. Although many have over-praised the "Fantasy" for its formal structure (it is, after all, pretty primitive in construction: sort of extended ABA pattern with a longish introduction), the heights are reached in its richness of texture, melodic invention, ravishing harmonies and all-around intensity. In nearly all respects it is the quintessence of Chopin, and one of the glories of the romantic age in music.

Sandor's performance has many good points and a few questionable ones. A supreme technician, nothing bothers him in any of the three pieces played—a considerable hurdle to overcome in music manually so difficult. He plans well, and there is a commendable lack of sentimentalization. So far, so good; but his brisk and accurate playing is hardly soul-satisfying. Some arbitrary points in phrasing and accents aside, one can take issue with the pianist's central conception, which tends to be small-scaled despite the healthy masses of sound. Cortot's interpretation of the "Fantasy", which still remains surprisingly good in recorded sound, has an intensity and tension that Sandor does not begin to duplicate. In the "Barcarolle", Sandor is a little hectic, substituting physical for mental force; and only in the "Fantasy-Impromptu" does his elegance and command of style achieve realization.

Columbia is making available the **Barcarolle** on a single disc. Concerning previous recordings of this piece, I seem to be one of the few who admires Rubenstein's version, which is big playing despite its many excesses. As for the "Fantasy-Impromptu", Iturbi's liquid performance is not to be sneered at.

The recording in the Sandor set is full, though somewhat lacking in brightness and clarity. —H.C.S.

CHOPIN: Fantasy-Impromptu; and **LISZT:** Liebestraum No. 3; played by **Gyorgy Sandor** (piano). Columbia disc 72835-D, price $1.00.

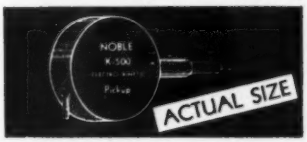
▲ Both of these works are taken from Sandor albums, the "Fantasy-Impromptu" from his Chopin set issued this month, the "Liebestraum" from the Liszt set issued in June, 1946. Each is a respectable performance that is just a shade short of what it should be, considering Sandor's enormous potentialities. For good, clean piano playing, though, the disc should not fail to provide enjoyment. —H.C.S.

Long Playing Re-Issues

THERE have been this past month a group of long-playing re-issues which have given us some enjoyable concerts. The fact that the music went on and on, uninterrupted by changer operation, permitted us to relax completely, light up a good cigar, and bury our sun-tanned nose (it hasn't changed in color as yet) in the scores of the various works heard. We

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were joined by a group of friends in these primarily critical concerts, which turned out to be, however, more pleasurable than critical. Friends who have not been sold on LPs were greatly impressed to hear them reproduced well. The reception of the long-playing disc has been most gratifying to the record manufacturers, we are sure; yet we believe it would have been even more satisfactiry had the initial player placed on the market been a better product.

Many people who have purchased cheap players have to their chagrin discovered that the LP reproduction from them was not of equal quality to that which they had from 78 rpm discs, heard through their standard equipment. There are differences in opinion on the value of some of the newer LPs, which can be traced to difference in volume levels and to frequency response from different machines. The need for an NAB roll-off was discussed by Mr. Lanier of Western Electric last month. Because we believe many readers would like to acquire a reliable and first rate LP player, we have asked Mr. Lanier and Mr. Irving Greene, chief engineer of Sun Radio and Electronics Co., to recomend what they regard as an "ideal" player—one that can be assembled and built by anyone.

Better "Highs"

Columbia's most recent LPs definitelv reveal a betterment of tonal quality on the high end. There is less evidence of stridency and "peaking." The rising curve in long-playing recording varies with different companies. London Gramophone does not use as wide a curve as Columbia has, more especially, in the past. This has resulted in some criticism of the London product which, in our estimation, has not been justified. When we say that any recording sounds good, it is not only the results of experience and reaction from one writer's equipment, but rather from the equipment of that of two or more of the staff—each of whom owns extended-range phonographs of varying characteristics.

The long-playing re-issues of Capitol-Telefunken, in which we are given to understand the Columbia's recording system has been employed, in most cases uphold the superiority of the LP technique over that of 78. Many of those heard to date have a definite edge over their 78 counterparts and many reveal an increased tonal "liveness."

We cite the following: Sibelius' "Symphony No. 1" (**Tor Mann**) (disc P-8020)" Haydn's "Surprise" symphony **(Schmidt Isserstedt)** coupled with Mozart's 'Eine kleine Nachtmusik" **(Kleiber)** (disc P-8038), Bruckner's 'Mass in E minor" (**Hamburgh State Opera Choir and Orch.)** (disc P-8004), and Bach's "A German Organ Mass" **(Fritz Heitman)** (disc P-8029).

Curiously, the **Mengelberg-Concertgebouw Orchestra** recordings of Strauss' "Heldenleben" (disc P-8013) and Franck's "Symphony" (disc P-8023) do not have this same tonal "liveness," though they are equally as good as their 78 counterparts. This, we believe, is due to the somewhat diffuse acoustic characteristics of the hall in which the recordings were made. Those delightful chamber-orchestra recordings of **Vivaldi's** "Concerto Grosso in G Minor" (**Guarnieri** and **Florence May Festival Orch.)** and Scarlatti's "Concerto Grosso in F minor" **(Weyns** and **Wiesbaden Collegium Musicum)** are preferred in the LP version (disc L-8035). A request for repetition of both was made by two friends when we played them, with the result that all critical thoughts were dispersed. **Stravinsky's** "The Card Game" **(Stravinsky** and the **Berlin Philharmonic** (disc L-8028) is best served in the LP version. It is our belief that these reissues of older recordings, which several companies are bringing out these days, are benefited by the LP re-recording process, even when the frequency range is slightly tapered off.

Brahm's Requiem

Heading Columbia's October LP re-issues are two ambitious re-recordings' **Handel's** "Twelve Concerti Grossi" **(Busch Chamber Players)** (set SL-159—four discs) and **Brahm's** "German Requiem" **Karajan** and **Vienna Phil. Orch.** etc.) (set SL-157 —two discs). The Handel we have not yet had time to hear completely. However, a sampling of the 8 sides reveals a satisfactory dubbing job. The Brahms "Requiem" was greatly enjoyed in the long-playing version. To hear **Elisabeth Schwartkopf's** beautiful singing of the soprano solo without the mood being broken was an appreciable experience; moreover, the succeeding baritone solo and chorus—"Denn wir haben hier"—for the first time sustained our interest from the record.

Those who admired **Gould's** "Interplay for Piano and Orchestra" an his album, containing "Cowboy Rhapsody," "Ameri-

can Salute," "New China March," etc., will find the music well served by the LP versions on disc ML-4218. Less satisfactory is the LP version of **Reiner's** fine performance of **Richard Strauss'** suite — "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" (disc ML-2062). There is an acidulous quality to the string tone in the upper registers which requires a roll-off on the high end to round off the tonal quality.

Mercury has released an LP version of **Fine Arts Quartet's** performance of **Schubert's** "Death and the Maiden" quartet (disc MG-10008). This is an excellent recording job. Though not as sensitive an interpretation of the music as that of the **Philharmonic Quartet** (English Columbia discs), this is nonetheless an eminently musical traversal of the score, with some finely controlled string playing, perfection of balance and tonal expressiveness. One has the feeling that the group carefully planned and extensively rehearsed their performance.

Berg's "Wozzeck"

Artists Record have dubbed the **Charlotte Boerner—Janssen Symphony of Los Angeles** recording of Excerpts from **Berg's** "Wozzeck" on a 10" disc (No. 500). While the quality of the original job has not been bettered, it should be noted the LP version is equally as good. This valuable contribution to modern music on records has a curious history. If the story of the manner in which it was originally devised is true, this is a third recording job.

For the orchestral part — we are told — was recorded first and the voice of Miss Boerner dubbed in later. From this product, the LP was made. Though it all adds up to tricky engineering, no one would know unless informed.

Two 10" LPs of Capitol-Telefunken, omitted above, deserve mention. The Reger "Boecklin Suite" **(Kleibert** and **German Phil. Orch. of Prague** (disc L-8011) and **Hindemith's** "Mathis der Maler" Berlin Phil. Orch.) (disc L-8003) should prove valuable additions to anyone's long-playing library. Both are firstrate dubbings.

Centra—Soria has followed it LP release of **Bellini's "Norma"** with a three disc set of **Puccini's** "Turandot" dubbed from the 1939 Parlophone performance. Columbia engineering technique has done much for this recording and, despite the limitations of its range, results are both satisfying and pleasureable. It should be noted that the former 16-disc set, which cost around $35.00 now becomes available at $17.85 and housed in an attractive and durable album. This type of album seems to us a good idea for Columbia and others to consider in relation to LP sets of three or more discs. Discussion of the opera and the recording appeared in our March 1948 issue.

In our estimation, "Turandot" boasts in its first act one of the finest things that Puccini ever wrote. Though the spirit of Mussorgsky and Richard Strauss hover in the background, the individuality of the composer is stamped on every page; and the strength and boldness of his writing reveals him at his mature best. The recorded performance is a praiseworthy one, though the singing of **Gina Cigna,** as Turandot, is often shrill and insteady. The role is a grueling one and not even the opulent **Jeritza** in her day was able to avoid shrillnes. The rest of the cast, **Merli** as The Unknown Prince, **Magda Oliviero** as Liu, **Luciano Neroni** as Timur, and the chorus acquit themselves credibly. But it is the orchestral direction of **Franco Ghione** which deserves the greatest praise; his is the unmistakable guiding force behind the whole performance. A lot of people are going to thank Cetra Soria for this LP release, for "Turandot" is an undeservedly neglected opera these days in America.

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CHOPIN: Mélancolie; **DOUGHERTY:** Love in the Dictionary; **Blanche Thebom** (mezzo-soprano) with **William Hughes** at the piano. Victor 10" disc 10-1485, $1.00.

▲ Singers love to sing the "E major Etude" (Op. 10, no. 3) and I suppose there is always an audience for the linked sweetness of its long melodic line when enhanced by a lovely vocal quality. Miss Thebom has gone farther than most in writing her own words. They are probably not the last that will be made for the tune. On the reverse is a setting of a text from Funk and Wagnals dictionary from the pen of Celius Dougherty, who has been very active as a song-composer recently. This is hardly one of his more enduring efforts. Its usefulness as a final encore is obviously enough, but who will want repeated performances on a disc is an open question. P.L.M.

A CONCERT OF FAVORITES: I Hear You Calling Me (Marshall); Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life (Herbert); I'll Take Thee Home Again Kathleen (Westendorff); Forgotten (Cowles); Because (d'Hardelot); Thine Alone (Herbert); Beloved (arr. Conely); Danny Boy (Weatherly, arr. Farnon); **Eugene Conley** (tenor), with Robert Farnon and his Orchestra. London Long-Playing disc LLP 13, 10-inch, price $3.95.

THE Nova Scotian born tenor, Eugene Conley, has proved himself a valued artist in the operatic roster of the New York City Center Opera Co. Conley has a fine natural lyric tenor, and he sings on the whole freely and with ease.

There is more artistic promise in this young singer than fulfillment today. In a recital like this his liberties are condonable. After all, he is making a play for popularity and those that admire these selections do not expect sober artistry. Moreover, there is a youthful fervor to much of his singing which evidences a healthful, manly vigor. But he can achieve some nice pianissimo effects, as in "I Hear You Calling Me" (his is a better performance than the recent Melton one). That he adds a high C to the ending of "Ah! Sweet Mystery" and sings "Because" a key higher than most can be charged to the proverbial tenor license. Excellent recording in this disc. --J.N.

ALBANESE IN SONG: Amarilli **(Caccini);** Se Florindo é fedele **(Scarlatti);** Oh! quand je dors **(Liszt);** Clair de Lune, Op. 83, no. 1 **(Szulc);** Lullaby, Op. 16, no. 1 **(Tchaikovsky);** A spirit flower **(Campbell-Tipton). Licia Albanese** (soprano) with **Victor Trucco** at the piano. Victor WMO 1316, three 7" discs, $3.95.

▲ It is understandable that an opera singer of Miss Albanese's accomplishments should be tempted to try her hand at song, but it is a little sad that she has let these disappointing records be published. Of the six songs only three come through with any degree of conviction, and two of these are the nearest approach she makes to her more familiar field of opera. "Oh! quand je dors" has been better sung - many years ago by Emmy Destinn and more recently by Maggie Teyte and, best of all, Eide Noréna - but Albanese brings it sincerity and dramatic felling. "A spirit flower", a far less enduring song, is also given with conviction, and rather surprisingly the Englished Tchaikovsky (practically a novelty on discs) is enunciated clearly on a good vocal line. It is too bad to have to hear this "Amarilli" so soon after the superb Suzanne Danco disc, and this "Se Florindo è fedele" is hardly comparable to that of Marian Anderson. Of the lumbering, over-accented "Clair de lune" the less said the better. Shades of Mary Garden, Melba and Teyte!

P.L.M.

GILBERT-SULLIVAN: Pirates of Penzance; **The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company** with the **New Promenade Orchestra** conducted by **Isadore Godfrey.** London LPs 80/81, price $11.90.

MARTYN GREEN, Darrell Fancourt, and all the rest of D'Oyly Carte Company are again in admirable form. And just as in last month's release of "Trial by Jury," London has given us a fine recording except for some distortion in the sound of high, loud passages.

While "Pirates of Penzance" has scarcely worn thin through the years, I find it less engaging than many another of the

G & S productions. The dramatic construction is a little too loose and some of the situations are so much less clever than the others in the work that it is difficult to keep one's attention focused with equal interest throughout the opera.

There is still plenty of satiric bite, however, in those scenes that show characters doing exactly what they wish to do by pretending to do their duty. The opera has other delectable sweetmeats too—like "I am the very model of a model Major General." And, I must say, to hear Martyn Green's performance of the latter is almost worth the price of the set.

—C.J.L.

HANDEL: Alexander's Feast—Revenge, Timotheous cries; **Trevor Anthony** (basso) with **London Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Malcolm Sargent.** London disc T-5157, $2.00.

▲ This fine spirited aria has never been a favorite with recording basses. It is too bad, therefore, not to be able to hail its release with rejoicing, but the performance is a heavy and unexciting one. Anthony's voice appears to be one of good range and volume, but tonally rather heavy and dull. More serious is the tendency to drag, bogged down, no doubt, by the floridity of Handel's melodic line. That this need not be so is demonstrated by his work in the recent Beecham performance of "Messiah": Beecham seems to have controlled him in a way that Sir Malcolm can not. The best virtues of this recording, then, are the playing of the orchestra and the brilliance and sheen that characterize its tone.

P.L.M.

KEDROFF: The Lord's Prayer; **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Holy God; **RIMSKI-KORSAKOFF** - JAROFF: Sadko - Song of the Indian Guest; arr. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord; **VILBOA - SCHVEDOFF:** The Sailors; arr. **DOBROVEIN:** A Hazel Tree; On Saturday; arr. **JAROFF:** Twelve Robbers; **The Don Cossak Chorus,** conducted by **Serge Jaroff.** Columbia set MM-844, four discs, price $5.00.

THIS release should be an excellent souvenir for those who have enjoyed the Don Cossacks in concert. The singing here is more musically restrained and more often on pitch than in the average live performance. One misses only the lively gestures and acrobatic bows of Jaroff, the

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In so far as the material is concerned, one might criticize the current trend away from established Russian choral composers such as Archangelsky, Kastalsky, Gretchaninov, etc., in favor of hodge-podge potpourris concocted from folk melodies. These, however, are cheerfully shouted with inimitable Russian verve and are infinitely preferable to the embarrassing gaucheness of Jaroff's "Song of India" arrangement. Tommy Dorsey did better with that one. --A.W.P.

MALOTTE: Blow Me Eyes; and **MacCATHMHAOIL-HARTY:** My Lagan Love; **Christopher Lynch** (tenor) with Eugene Bossart at the piano. Columbia disc 7637-M, price $1.00.

▲ The character song of Malotte asks for a more virile voice than Mr. Lynch's. The singer sounds like an immature youth out of his element. "My Lagan Love" is a tender song which the tenor sentimentalizes too much for my liking, but it must be said he is better suited vocally to this composition. Very forward, realistic recording. --J.N.

MARCHESI: La Foletta (in Italian); and **TAUBER-NEUMANN:** The Bird in the Woods (in German); **Erna Sack** (soprano) with orchestra. Capital-Telefunken 10" disc 77-80133, price $1.00.

▲ Miss Sack has such a good time with these two encore songs that it is almost certain her admirers will take to this record in the same spirit. --J.N.

MUSSORGSKY: Boris Godounow—Death of Boris; **Raphael Arie** (basso) with **Choir** and **London Symphony Orchestra,** conducted by **Josef Krips**. London disc T-5125, $2.00.

THIS DISC presents another of those mental hurdles which increasingly complicate the life of the record collector over the years. Those of us who heard Chaliapin sing Boris in the flesh (and many who know him only by records) must always associate his dynamic art with this music. Kipnis faced this difficulty with some success (Victor M-1000) but did not make us forget his elder colleague. Now here comes Arie, obviously a greatly gifted vocalist and an artist of power and imagination. To be sure, there was more drama in Chaliapin's tonal quality—indeed there was more extra-musical drama in his singing. This is a straighter performance, one more scrupulously faithful to the score. And it has what none of Chaliapin's various recordings of the scene could ever have—a magnificently realistic choral and orchestral background. I particularly like the effect of real distance when the chorus begins to chant. In Chaliapin's studio recording (Victor 6724) the chorus was right there, and in the exciting "take" of an actual performance (Victor 15177) the results were too much a matter of chance. Here the illusion is complete. Conductor Krips also is a man of imagination. There is a breath-taking moment of silence at the actual death, and a superbly soft and throbbing curtain postlude. P.L.M.

AN OPERATIC RECITAL: Pagliacci—Serenata: O Colombina (Leoncavallo); Traviata—De'miei bollenti spiriti (Verdi); L'Elisir d'Amore—Una furtiva lagrima (Donizetti); Cavalleria Rusticana—Siciliana: O Lola (Mascagni); Sadko—Chant Hindou (Rimski-Korsakoff); Manon—Le Rêve (Massenet). **Dusan Georgevic** (tenor) with **L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande,** conducted by **Alberto Erede.** London LP 10" disc LPS 79, $3.85.

OPERATIC RECITAL: Carmen—Flower Song (Bizet); Faust—Salut. demeure chaste et pure (Gounod); Turandot—Non piangere, Lui (Puccini); Martha—M'appari (Flotow); La Bohème—Che gelida manina (Puccini); La Favorita—Spirto gentil (Donizetti); Rigoletto—Questa o quella; La donne è mobile (Verdi); Tosca—Recondita armonia; E lucevan le Stelle (Puccini). **Eugene Conley** (tenor) with **New Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Alberto Erede** and **Royalton Kisch.** London LP disc LLP 26, $5.95.

HERE are two of the currently rising younger tenors in comprehensive operatic recitals designed to show the reasons for their successes. At the same time they point the ways they should go in order to escape from that qualifying adjective, "promising." Georgevic has not previously been familiar to me. The voice is a light lyric one, to judge by these selections, inclined toward that tonal whiteness so often characteristic of Slavic tenors. Also characteristic is the fact that his Italian arias come off more idiomatically than his French, and the one he sings in Russian

most naturally of all. He has taste and a commendable restraint and sings with generally good intonation (there is some uncertainty in the "Manon" air). One feels that he hasn't quite "jelled" - that given time and experience he is going to sing much better.

The American Mr. Conley is another case, and yet some of the same remarks apply to him. His is a strong and virile voice, capable of doing easily anything these arias demand of him, including brilliant high C's. But he has some distance to go before reaching complete maturity. One feels that his instincts are right and that he is on the way to fulfilling his intentions, but has not yet arrived at complete mastery. Like Mr. Georgevic he is more successful in maintaining a good line in Italian than in French, and he is best when he can pull all the stops and sing out. "Questa o quella" and "Spirto gentil" seem more than life size, though the latter hasn't the "musical" bigness the best "bel canto" tenors of earlier generations used to give it. I am grateful to Conley that he makes no attempt to emotionalize in the manner of so many Italians, yet I miss the compensating surety of declamation that would give real weight to what he sings. In short, here is a fine, clear, powerful voice, and commendable but unsubtle style.

P.L.M.

OPERETTA PROGRAM: Der Favorit—Du sollst der Kaiser meiner Seele sein **(Stolz);** Cliva—Ich bin verliebt, ich weiss nicht wie mir geschar **(Dostal);** Die Flucht ins Glück—Wiegenlied **(Dostal);** Paganini—Liebe, du Himmel auf Erde **(Lehar);** Die schwedische Nachtigall—Postillon-Lied **(Crothe);** Der Zarewitsch — Einer wird kommen **(Lehar). Hilde Gueden** (soprano) with **New Promenade Archestra,** conducted by **Hans May.** London 10" LP disc, LPS 47, $3.95.

▲ Hilde Gueden is said to be a woman of personal beauty and charm. The latter quality is amply attested by this collection of continental favorites. The voice floats easily through the bright and appealing melodies, never losing the quality I can only describe as lyrical. With it all she has a way of touching up her words to give them point after the manner of the otherwise totally different Marlene Dietrich (i.e. the Dietrich of her pre-Hollywood days). The recording as we have it in LP is rich, and clear and open as the voice itself. I predict that this disc will make a hit, even, perhaps, it might play a part in bringing the singer to these shores.

P.L.M.

SCHUBERT: Der Lindenbaum; Die Post; **Heinrich Schlusnus** (baritone) with **Sebastian Peschko** at the piano. London disc T-5160, $2.00.

THESE recent recordings of Schlusnus (now 61) furnish proof that he has lost neither his voice nor his cunning. The songs, to be sure, are no rarities - because of their very familiarity they put the singer on his mettle. I can think of no "Lindenbaum" on records that has given me more pleasure. The tempo set by the piano prelude and nicely maintained by Schlusnus is a happily unsentimental one, and indeed this lack of surface emotion is the outstanding virtue of the interpretation. The singing throughout is quiet and meditative and the piano is of a piece with it. If I

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were to pick a flaw it would be that the song does not come more to the reality of life in the agitated middle section - a little more bite in the diction would have done it. In "Die Post" the singer moves further away from the expected. The **tempo** seems slow, in the repetitions of the words "Mein Herz" there are some original dynamic effects and there is one surprisingly broken phrase. With all respect to Schlusnus it is Mr. Peschko and his portrayal of the mai. coach in the piano part that to me make the song exciting and new. No small amount of the credit for the disc should go to the recording engineers, who have allowed the artists plenty of space for their admirably poised performances. If this is a fair sample we may rejoice that the art of Lieder-singing is not dead. P.L.M.

TEMPLETON: Vienna in the Springtime, and Roses in Wintertime; **Eleanor Steber** (soprano) with **Alec Templeton** at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1473, price $1.00, or 7-inch disc 49-0421, $.95.

FAINT echoes of Noel Coward and Johann Strauss hover over these songs. In both Templeton has given himself a piano solo in the middle which some singers might not favor. There is a melodic lilt to these pieces which will undoubtedly appeal to many, but the sentimental, quite unoriginal words leave something to be desired. Miss Steber sings charmingly and Mr. Templeton plays with his usual easy style. The recording is acceptable, nothing unusual. —J.N.

SUPPE: Boccaccio—Excerpts: **Elisabeth Schwarzkopf** (soprano), and **Rupert Glawitsch** (tenor) with chorus and orchestra of the **German Opera House,** Berlin, conducted by **Walter Lutze.** Capitol-Telefunken disc 89-80109, $1.25.

▲ Those who have sampled Viennese operettas by means of Capitol's recent Lehar and Johann Strauss sets will harly need to be told that here is the music in the authentic tradition sung by voices far better than we usually associate with light opera in this country, and recorded with fullness and brilliance. Both singers were heard in the afore-mentioned Lehar album Schwarzkopf, of course, is the same who sang so beautifully in Columbia's Brahms "Requiem", and whose reputation as a singer of Mozart and Bach is growing apace. I found some unevenness in the reproduction - the second side seemed a bit more powerful than the first, and there was some tonal fuzz toward the end. P.L.M

VERDI: Rigoletto — La donna è mobile and Questa o quella; **FLOTOW:** Marta —M'appari tutt'amor; **Richard Tucker** (tenor) with orchestra, conducted by **Emil Cooper.** Columbia disc 72828-D, $1.00.

ONE can begin with asking why the reversal of the "Rigoletto" arias? "Questa o quella" heard ofter "La donna è mobile" is anticlimatic. Tucker handles the first very well but in the latter he shows little feeling for characterization. His "Marta" exhibits more fervor than feeling and at least one disturbing liberty with style. It should be observed that the tenor's voice shows a richness and roundness of tone not apparent in his earliest recordings with an occasional tightness and strain that one hopes will not persist. For Tucker is an exceptionally gifted singer and his voice is growing in power and quality. The realistic recording of both voice and orchestra is Columbia engineering at its best. —J. N.

VIVALDI: Gloria Mass; **Chorus of the Choral Academy, Lecco; Silvana Zanolla,** soprano; **Adalgisa Giordano,** mezzo-soprano; **Orchestra of the Teatro Nuovo, Milan,** conducted by **Arrigo Pedrollo.** Vox LP disc PLP-6610, price $5.95.

THAT this is an exciting recording has probably been discovered by many since its appearance some time ago. For the many who do not know the work and who will buy it, this Gloria Mass will perhaps reveal a new aspect of Vivaldi's art. The performance is a good one and the recording, made in Italy, is completely satisfying. All of this augurs well for future Vox releases from Italy.

Though labelled a Mass, this work is actually a setting of the Gloria, the second of the five major divisions of the Catholic mass. In the list of the composer's works, it is only marked "Gloria." The Italian love of color, warmth, and sentiment is found in this music. Emotionally, it alternates between dramatic fervor and lyrical grace and beauty.

There is not a dull moment in the work and, as one listens, it becomes understandable why Vivaldi was so highly regarded by his contemporaries; and at the same time, it is incomprehensible that later-day commentators from Burney down could have so underestimated his genius.

The annotator prefers to compare and relate Vivaldi to Bach, but in my estimation to appreciate the motivating source of this type of music one should return to the works of Giovanni Gabrieli. The Italian temperament is to be understood; it is at once more objective, sensuous and exalted. In the Cathedral of St. Mark at Venice, in the days of Gabrieli and Vivaldi, there was more pomp and splendor in almost all religious ceremonies than was to be encountered in the churches of Bach. And the music written for performance at such ceremonies was naturally conceived as a dramatic representation of the faith. Much could be written on this subject, but my concern at the moment is with the right receptive mood for this music, which I believe should be heard and enjoyed without thoughts of others who have set the same text in a more profoundly subjective manner. This "Gloria" is both a noble and heartfelt expression of a highly gifted composer's response to his faith.

—P. H. R.

WAGNER: Die Meistersinger—Wahn! Wahn! ueberall Wahn!; **Paul Schoeffler** (bass-baritone) with **National Symphony Orchestra,** conducted by **Karl Rankl.** London disc T-5159, $2.00.

IT IS the misfortune of every present day Wagnerian baritone that he must be compared with Friedrich Schorr. Even the admired Herbert Janssen, whose interpretations of the two great monologues of Hans Sachs have been fairly recently presented by Columbia CMX-269) failed to eclipse the weakly recorded and technically imperfect recordings of his predecessor. Schoeffler has a fuller and more impressive voice than Janssen at his best, and he comes very close to the essential nobility of utterance that made Schorr incomparable. Furthermore he is teamed with a better orchestra than that of the Metropolitan which accompanied Janssen and he has been recorded with almost frightening realism. The total effect is so brilliant and expansive that it may conceivably cause more difficulty on small machines, and on the very best will probably be preferred with the volume and the highs taken down a bit. But those who love their "Meistesinger" have a treat in store: they will not only hear justice done the role of Sachs, but follow the orchestral details in a way only recently made possible.

P.L.M.

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● This personable young singer is rapidly carving a niche for himself. Already he is being named in the same breath with Sinatra, Crosby, Como, etc. He has an agreeable voice and a pleasant style. These records offer full evidence. The two numbers from "South Pacific" are especially good. The unnamed orchestra lends good support and Victor has contributed excellent recording and smooth surfaces.

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Smiles and **Bop (Jolly Jo)**; Jo Stafford with Dave Lambert and His Vocal Choir, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-604. **Just One Way To Say I Love You** and **Homework**; Jo Stafford with The Starlinghters and Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-665. **A Thought In My Heart** and **Whispering Hope**; Jo Stafford and Gordon MacRae, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-690.

● This is another young artist, with a fresh young voice and style, who can be depended upon for an entertaining program any time. "Jolly Jo" is piece with a whacky mathematical title (not printable) offering a good dig in the ribs to bop. "Smiles," too, one suspects was done with tongue in cheek. Both are given rousing rhythmic performances by all concerned. The two numbers from Berlin's "Miss Liberty" are tastefully sung. In fact, this version of "Homework" is surely one of the best on records to date. The duets are another matter. Though it would be difficult to find something to say against them, either as songs or performances, one wonders why they bothered at all.

Two Little New Little Eyes and **Now! Now! Now!** Gordon MacRae, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-679.

● The cute little lullaby with the cute tongue-twister title is done with nice feeling for sentiment, and MacRae's warm voice fits it well. The reverse, though peppy, is less interesting as a song. Paul Weston holds up his end excellently.

The Huckle-Buck and **Again**; Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra. Vocals by Charlie Shavers and Marcy Lules. Victor 20-3427.

The Huckle-Buck and **That Wonderful Girl of Mine**; Benny Goodman and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-576.

● This Andy Gibson-Roy Alfred opus is the latest attempt to start a new dance craze. It will probably succeed, too, because "The Huckle-Buck" has just enough bounce and whackiness to catch the public fancy. Of the two performances, Goodman's is better rhythmically and besides there are several swell choruses of improvisation by some of his men, notably Wardell Gray on sax, Doug Mettome on trumpet, Buddy Greco on piano. Tommy Dorsey's version is a little more straightforward and therefore probably more danceable. Both flipovers are pretty much run-of-the-mill stuff.

It Happens Every Spring and **Every Tiime I Meet You**; Margaret Whiting with Frank De Vol and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-590.

● These two songs from the pictures "It Happens Every Spring" and "The Beautiful Blonde From Bashful Bend" are pretty weak stuff. They would be nothing at all if it were not for Margaret Whiting's voice and performances.

Hackensack Mama and **Unwelcome Blues**; Blues Taylor, with Rhyth. Capital 57-70003.

● Good blues singing, in the traditional manner, and even better rhythmic accompaniment. In fact, there is a spot for piano on the "Hackensack" side and one for guitar on the "Unwelcome" which nearly steal the shows.

Black Coffee and **As You Desire Me**; Sarah Vaughn, with Orchestra under the direction of Joe Lipman. Columbia 38462.

● This is Sarah's first appearance on discs I believe since Musicraft's demise. She has lost nothing of her vocal personality and style in the interim. "Black Coffee", a blues, is an excellent blues. The reverse is less interesting because the music is inferior, but this is a worthwhile disc nevertheless. Excellent recording.

Collectors' Releases

(Continued from page 40)

the "Serenade" and the final high tone is needlessly pushed. This is a song that fares best in a light soprano voice.

The voice of Schlusnus sounds younger than in his electric records. Both songs are sung with style and feeling. The unnamed pianist deserves praise.

The American-born Piccaver was a favorite of the Vienna Opera, which one can understand when listening to his recordings. Though he sang German well, his production belonged to the Italian school. The exacting tessitura of the "Turandot" arias is handled with the utmost ease by him and with appropriate dramatic fervor.

Slezak was a great singer in the days before World War I, but thereafter he often showed strain in his production. It is all too painfully apparent in parts of the "Preislied," though his style remains that of the mature artist. Even in the two lieder one realizes the tenor is no longer in his prime —J. N.

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